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UNDP

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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO

Support for Establishment of the Basic Agricultural Services Programme (BASP) Infrastructure in Blocks V and VI (LES/77/036)

Report of the Administrator

Date of present approval:	June 1978
Starting date of project activities:	June 1978
Planned completion date:	May 1981
To be executed by:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Government implementing agency:	Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives and Marketing
Estimated cost of assistance planned under present approval:	$288 300
Source of UNDP financing:	Indicative Planning Figure (IPF)

I. Background

1. The experience of major area-based rural development projects in Lesotho (Leribe Pilot Scheme, Senqu River, Thaba Bosiu and Khomokhoana) has indicated that a lack of adequate roads combined with inadequate marketing services has imposed the main constraints upon agricultural development in the lowland and foothill regions. A nation-wide programme, termed the Basic Agricultural Services Programme (BASP), has therefore been conceived with the object of alleviating these basic constraints. The major elements of BASP will include a system of railhead stores, unit level stores and lock-up stores for supplying farm inputs and mobile crop purchasing teams; improvement and subsequent maintenance of roads; credit and training courses for animal draught contractors; assistance in the repair and maintenance of farm equipment; and credit to farmers for the purchase of seasonal inputs, implements and tractors; etc.

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2. As already indicated, there has, in recent years, been a significant amount of BASP-related work in various area-based projects. One such project has been the UNDP-assisted Senqu River Agricultural Extension project (LES/72/003),[1/] from which important experience in the utilization of development techniques has been gained. Also as a result of the area-based project at Thaba Bosiu, techniques have been elaborated to overcome the most pressing constraints to agricultural production. BASP has been designed to extend these techniques throughout the lowland areas of Lesotho comprising three quarters of the arable acreage of the country. It is a joint venture involving several donors including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) co-financing the programme, at an estimated cost of $35 million. The ultimate objective of BASP is to make a contribution towards raising rural incomes by increasing agricultural productivity with a view to attaining self-sufficiency in basic food grains and exportable cash crops.

II. Objectives and activities

3. The immediate objective of the project is to assist in the establishment of the infrastructure required by the farmers to increase their agricultural productivity. To this end, the national and international staff working together will provide: the necessary farming inputs (fertilizers, seeds, insecticides); fair and efficient marketing services; elaborated extension techniques to improve crop husbandry practices; farm mechanization rental and repair services; and credit.

III. Inputs

4. UNDP will provide, through the Executing Agency, for the services of a road engineer and five United Nations volunteers in accounts, marketing and workshop assistance; and for equipment.

5. The Government will provide professional and supporting staff, supplies and equipment directly to the project.

IV. Financial data

6. The expenditure components of the planned assistance are as follows:

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Personnel	261 300
Equipment	4 000
Miscellaneous	23 000
	288 300

1/ DP/L.257 (Vol.II), p.23.

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